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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KWMN](#) [KISL](#) [KU](#) [NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ISLAMISTS](#)  
SUBJECT: CABINET SWORN IN DESPITE ISLAMISTS' OBJECTIONS TO  
UNVEILED EDUCATION MINISTER

REF: A. KUWAIT 447  
[1](#)B. KUWAIT 430

[1](#)1. (SBU) Members of the new Cabinet were sworn in before Parliament April 2 despite two tribal Islamists' objections to Nouriyah Al-Sabih, the new Education Minister and a liberal, appearing in the Assembly hall without a head scarf.

When Al-Sabih began to take the parliamentary oath of office, MP Daifallah Bou Ramya protested loudly, saying "she should not be allowed to take the oath because she does not comply with Islamic regulations." Only one other tribal Islamist MP, Khaled Al-Adwa, spoke up in agreement with Bou Ramya, who was otherwise ignored by the rest of Parliament. Bou Ramya continued to rant for several minutes before he was silenced by the Speaker and the session moved on. After Al-Sabih finished taking the oath, a number of women sitting in the public observation balcony broke into loud applause.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The other 15 Islamist MPs appeared to take a different view of Al-Sabih's presence in Parliament. PolOff observed controversial Salafi MP Faisil Al-Muslim conversing cordially with Al-Sabih, a scene that set cameras flashing throughout the hall, and after the session MP Nasser Al-Sane, a member of the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), the political arm of the Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood, told press that wearing the head scarf was Al-Sabih's "own decision."

[1](#)3. (SBU) After being sworn in, Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al-Sabah delivered a speech in which he called for increased cooperation between the government and Parliament, and promised to submit an action plan in the next few weeks and the government's five year development plan at the beginning of the next parliamentary term in October. Parliament was unusually productive during its first meeting since the Cabinet resigned March 4, passing an anti-monopolization law and an amendment to the parliamentary by-laws to simplify administrative procedures. MPs also obtained the two-thirds majority necessary to override the government's rejection of an increase in student stipends.

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